



METHODS OF ELECTING LIEUTENANT GOVERNORS

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RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE OFFICE OF LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

According to the National Lieutenant Governors Association, most lieutenant governors are, under their state's constitution, the first official in the line of succession to the governor's office. In 26 states, they preside over the state Senate and are the only officials with powers and duties in both the executive and legislative branches.

ISSUE

Which states elect candidates for governor and lieutenant governor separately, and which elect them jointly? In those that elect them jointly, describe the procedures for nominating major party candidates for lieutenant governor.

SUMMARY

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), 18 states elect candidates for governor and lieutenant governor separately and 25, including Connecticut, elect them jointly ([CGS § 9-181](#)). Five of the seven remaining states (Arizona, Maine, New Hampshire, Oregon, and Wyoming) do not have a lieutenant governor, and two (Tennessee and West Virginia) assign the position to the Senate president, whom the State Senate elects.

States holding joint elections use various procedures for nominating major party candidates for lieutenant governor. Generally, the procedures involve (1) gubernatorial candidates selecting a running mate; (2) candidates for lieutenant governor receiving their party's nomination during the primary phase, independent of gubernatorial candidates; or (3) political parties nominating their candidate for lieutenant governor at a state convention.

SEPARATE ELECTIONS

Eighteen states elect candidates for governor and lieutenant governor separately, as shown in Table 1. In these states, candidates' names are listed individually on the primary and general election ballots, which may result in voters electing candidates who belong to different political parties.

Table 1: Lieutenant Governor Elected Separately

Alabama	Nevada
Arkansas	North Carolina
California	Oklahoma
Delaware	Rhode Island
Georgia	South Carolina
Idaho	Texas
Louisiana	Vermont
Mississippi	Virginia
Missouri	Washington

Sources: NCSL, the National Lieutenant Governors Association (NLGA), and state statutes

JOINT ELECTIONS

In states with joint elections, the names of nominees for governor and lieutenant governor appear together on the general election ballot, and electors cast one vote for both candidates (i.e., the gubernatorial slate). However, states have different procedures for nominating lieutenant governor candidates.

Gubernatorial Selection

In 13 of the 25 states with joint elections, gubernatorial candidates select a running mate. In several of these states, the selection must occur before the primary, while in others it can occur after. For example, in Maryland, Minnesota, and Ohio, gubernatorial candidates must make their selection by the time they file their declaration of candidacy, and if there is a primary, they run together as a slate (MD Code, Election Law, § 5-205; MSA § 204B.06; and ORC § 3513.04). Conversely, the selection deadlines in Colorado and Florida are seven and nine days following the primary, respectively (CRSA § 1-4-502 and FSA § 99.063). While such states do not necessarily preclude gubernatorial candidates from selecting a running mate before the primary, they do not require it either. Florida, for example, prints “not yet designated” on the ballot next to the name of a gubernatorial candidate who has not named a running mate by the time of the primary election.

Table 2 lists the states in which gubernatorial candidates select their running mate.

Table 2: Gubernatorial Candidate Selects Running Mate

Colorado	Montana
Florida	Nebraska
Illinois*	New Jersey
Kansas*	North Dakota*
Kentucky	Ohio*
Maryland*	Utah*
Minnesota*	

SOURCES: NCSL, NLGA, and state statutes

*Deadline for choosing running mate is before the primary

Separate Primaries

In eight of the 25 states with joint elections, including Connecticut, candidates for governor and lieutenant governor are subject to separate primaries ([CGS §§ 9-372, 9-382](#), and [9-400](#)). This means that within the same party, the party-endorsed candidate for lieutenant governor could face a primary, even if the party-endorsed candidate for governor does not. In the absence of a primary, party-endorsed candidates become the nominees. Table 3 lists the states with separate primaries.

Table 3: Lieutenant Governor Subject to Separate Primary

Alaska	New Mexico
Connecticut	New York
Hawaii	Pennsylvania
Massachusetts	Wisconsin

SOURCES: NCSL, NLGA, and state statutes

State Party Convention

In four states, major political parties nominate candidates for lieutenant governor, among other offices, at a state convention following the primary. In practice, the gubernatorial candidate often makes the decision beforehand, and the convention delegates officially confirm the nominee. Table 4 lists these states.

Table 4: Lieutenant Governor Nominated at State Party Convention

Indiana	Michigan
Iowa	South Dakota

SOURCES: NCSL, NLGA, and state statutes